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SECTION 15

STATE WATER PLAN - JORDAN RIVER BASIN

WATER-RELATED RECREATION

Climatologically, Utah is one of the nation's driest states. Access and immediacy to water, in all its natural and man-made settings, is extremely important to Utah's recreating public.

15.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to describe the Jordan River Basin water-related recreational resources, to identify problems and needs, and to offer some recommendations. This evaluation includes passive and active recreational activities as well as resident and non-resident tourism and educational aspects (i.e. recreation programs, interpretive programs and skill training) performed in an outdoor water-related activity (streams, lakes, wetlands, rivers, reservoirs and swimming pools). Water-related recreational activities can be divided into two groups; those requiring direct contact with the water and those recreational activities which benefit from the water in a more indirect way. Activities which require direct contact with water include fishing, hunting, swimming, boating, sailing, wind surfing, scuba diving, water skiing, personal water craft uses, jet skiing and remote controlled model boats. Recreational activities which benefit indirectly from the presence of water include hunting, camping, picnicking, hiking, bicycle riding, mountain bike riding, ATV use and touring. Water-related activities (e.g. fishing, hunting camping, picnicking, water play and sunbathing, power boating, and swimming) typically rank among the top outdoor recreation activities.

15.2 Setting

Aside from the Jordan River, the Great Salt Lake and a few small reservoirs in the Wasatch Mountains, Salt Lake County has no major lakes, rivers or reservoirs. Consequently, opportunities for recreational activities involving direct contact with water are limited. At the north end of the county, the Great Salt Lake represents the largest recreational water attraction. Ever since the first settlers entered Salt Lake Valley, the Great Salt Lake has been a source of curiosity and a recreational attraction.

Current recreational facilities on Great Salt Lake within Salt Lake County include the Great Salt Lake State Park and Saltair Resort, a privately developed facility.

Other water-related recreational activities include several privately owned and operated hunting clubs, a significant number of county and city owned swimming pools, as well as several privately owned and operated water theme parks and swimming pools. Quite a few city and county parks offer picnicking and other day-use activities in the immediate proximity to ponds, small lakes and streams.

One of the big uses of Jordan River water is the establishment of privately owned and operated duck clubs. These facilities use existing flows of the Jordan River to enhance marsh areas along the shoreline of the Great Salt Lake.

The skiing industry is a major recreation activity in the Jordan River Basin and has a favorable economic impact upon the entire state. The U. S. Forest Service manages approximately 95,500 acres of forested lands in the Wasatch Range including much of the lands used by alpine and cross-country ski enthusiasts. This gives the Forest Service responsibility and control over much of the skiing activities in the basin.

The federal government recently approved and partially funded a recreational component for the Little Dell Reservoir. This will make the little Dell Reservoir available for limited recreational activities in the future.

15.3 Organization and Regulations

15.3.1 State

The Utah Legislature created what is today the Division of Parks and Recreation in 1957. Lawmakers instructed the division to develop parks and recreation areas and preserve and protect

historical sites and scenic treasures. The boating program was added in 1959 and the off-highway vehicle program in 1971.

The major objectives for the state parks system are: 1) Provide a broad spectrum of high quality parks and recreational resources; 2) enhance the economic vitality of the state through increased tourist and vacationist traffic; 3) enforce state boating and off-highway vehicle laws; 4) regulate, protect and interpret the natural and historic resources in the park system; and 5) provide technical assistance and matching grants for outdoor recreation development.

The Division of Parks and Recreation provides matching grants for riverway and non-motorized trail enhancement. This program leverages state dollars with local dollars, requiring 50 percent local match. Since 1991, 260 requests totaling \$10.2 million have been received statewide. To date, 107 projects have been awarded funds totaling \$3.2 million. In the Jordan River Basin these funds, amounting to more than \$250,000 since 1991, have been directed primarily at the development of the Jordan River Parkway.

15.4 Outdoor Recreational Facilities and Use

15.4.1 City and County Parks

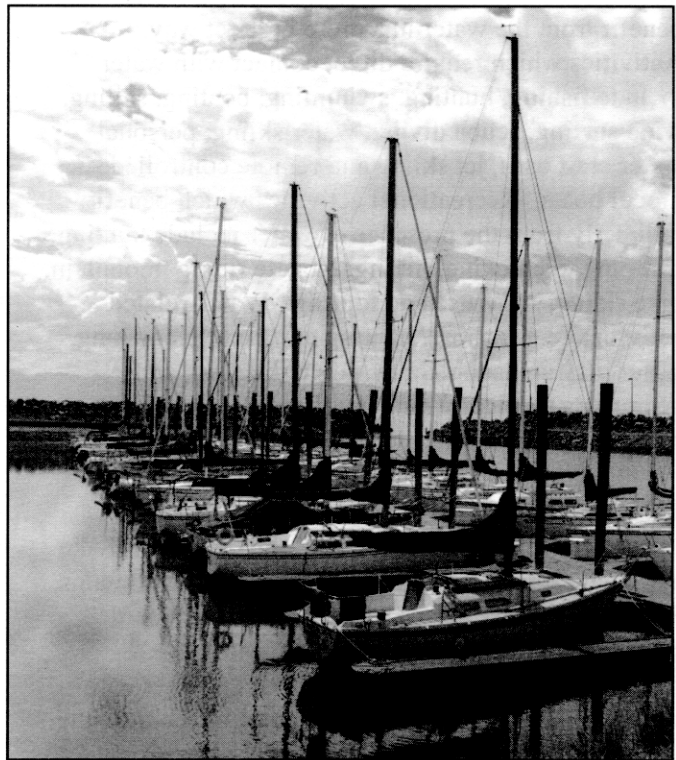
Numerous county and city parks are located throughout the basin. Many of these parks are not located near large bodies of water, though efforts have been made to incorporate direct and indirect water use when possible. Excellent examples include Liberty, Sugar House and Murray City parks. Water courses have been effectively used at each of these locations. The county and others are presently working to improve the facilities around Decker Lake in an effort to promote recreational activities at what is presently used as a storm drainage and flood control facility. City and county swimming pools and golf courses are located in virtually every community. In the past five years, a coordinated effort has been made to develop a Jordan River Parkway that runs from Bluffdale to Rose Park. The cities of Bluffdale, Riverton, South Jordan, West Jordan, Murray, Midvale, West Valley City, South Salt Lake and Salt Lake City, along with the county and state, are all involved in the planning and development of an integrated parkway that will eventually run the length of the river.

Salt Lake City and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) worked jointly to complete a downtown park which features City Creek. For years City Creek has flowed through the downtown area in underground pipes. Although flood flows will continue underground, the creation of a new park with some of the City Creek flow returned to the surface is a token of the public's desire to include water in their parks and living space.

15.4.2 State Parks

The Division of Parks and Recreation manages several state parks in the basin. Only two, however, are associated with a body of water. The Great Salt Lake State Park is located just north of U.S. Interstate 80 approximately 16 miles west of Salt Lake City. For the past couple of years, Great Salt Lake State Park has been visited annually by just over 500,000 people. The Great Salt Lake State Park offers swimming, boating and camping as well as a myriad of recreational day use activities.

The other state park that features water as an attraction is Jordan River Park in Salt Lake County.

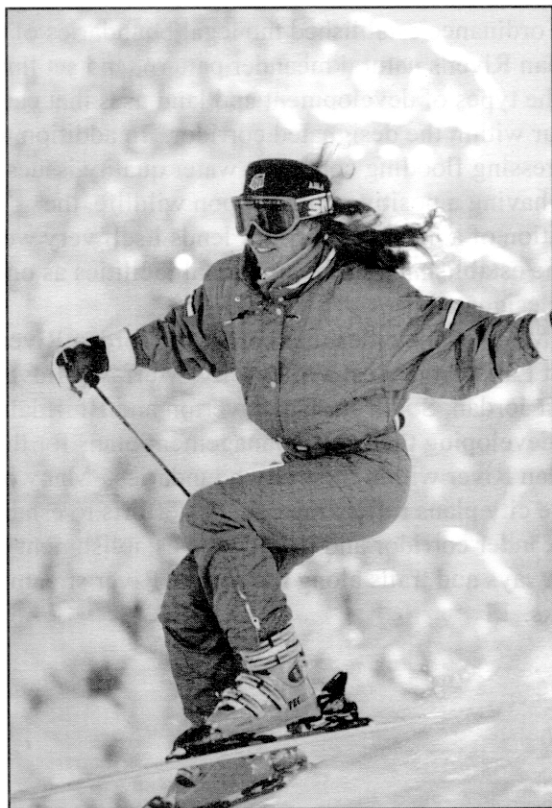


Great Salt Lake State Park Marina

The Jordan River Park is an eight-mile corridor along the Jordan River from 1700 South to the Davis County line. Although the Jordan River does not offer swimming, activities include canoe and float opportunities, picnic areas, a jogging and exercise course, a handicap exercise course, an off-road vehicle riding area, and a par-3 golf course.

15.4.3 Federal Parks

The basin has thousands of acres of federal lands, including Forest Service lands in the Wasatch Range and Bureau of Land Management land in the south end of the Salt Lake Valley, but no federal parks. In addition to managing these lands and controlling the



Skiing is great along the Wasatch Front

recreational use on them, the federal government is involved in funding city, county and state recreational development through the National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund grants (LWCF). This program provides federal funds for outdoor recreation acquisition and development, and they are available to local governmental entities (cities, counties and states) as 50/50 matching grants. As shown in Table

15-1, \$12.7 million in federal grants have been appropriated for various local, city, county and state projects in the Jordan River Basin since 1967. The total value of the projects, with matching funds, was nearly \$26 million. Most have been city and county projects. Only two of the 72 projects have been state projects: Jordan River Parkway (\$612,000) and Great Salt Lake Saltair Beach (\$885,973).

Not all of the Land and Water Conservation Fund grants have been for water-related recreation. While some type of minor water feature on a site is nearly always preferable, only a small percent of the projects were in association with major water features; e.g., Jordan River Parkway, Great Salt Lake Saltair Beach. Many other funded projects included some type of water-related park amenity. Water features are highly desired by park users for many reasons including the usual presence of a variety of wildlife and visual amenities such as reflective values, change and visual relief from surroundings, the audio values of lapping and running water, and recreational opportunities such as swimming, sun bathing, beach play, fishing, boating, rafting, scuba diving, waterfowl hunting and ice skating.

A recreational component for Little Dell Reservoir has been approved and partially funded by Congress. This recreational component will include picnic and restroom facilities, interpretive nature trails, and facilities for small non-motorized water craft.

15.4.4 State River Way Enhancement Program

A state-wide river way enhancement program was set up by Senate Bill 143 in 1986 to reduce flood damage, enhance water quality, provide outdoor recreation, provide fishery and wildlife habitat, aid in water reclamation, protect cultural resources, and provide a non-consumptive amenity in terms of functional open space along important river corridors throughout the state. This program is intended to protect river corridors and provide public access, which is a major statewide issue and need according to the Utah SCORP planning process and public surveys.

15.4.5 Central Utah Project Completion Act

Section 311 (d) (1) authorizes \$500,000 to construct recreation facilities within Salt Lake County as proposed by the state of Utah for the Provo/Jordan River Parkway.

15.5 Recreational Activity Problems and Needs

15.5.1 Outdoor Recreation Survey

It is important to know what kind of outdoor recreation is occurring in the basin. A major outdoor recreation survey was completed in 1991 on a statewide basis. It provided part of the data needed to update the *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP). In the Jordan River Basin, 52 percent of the 300 random household questionnaires were returned.

The first question asked in the survey was: "What five (5) recreation activities do you most enjoy participating in as an individual?" Activities were selected from a prepared list. Figure 15-1 shows the 45 recreational activities selected by residents as their favored individual recreational activities. Fishing was the number one response of residents, followed by walking, camping, golfing and picnicking.

Another question asked was: "In order of preference, what five (5) recreation activities does your family as a whole most enjoy?" Developed camping becomes number one on the family chart (Figure 15-2); whereas, developed camping (camping in developed areas with services) was number 3 on the individual participation list. Picnicking turned up second on the "family activity" list followed by fishing, driving\ sightseeing and pool swimming.

Family outdoor recreation activity is significant to development, design and management decisions in terms of the types of activity and the magnitude or frequency of individual versus family/group activity. Park use information validates the importance of providing group-use facilities at recreation sites.

Another important aspect of the survey was its assessment of the need for improved recreational facilities. One question asked was: "...In my community, new opportunities/facilities should be developed for the following recreation activities:". Golf and bicycling facilities topped the list, followed by swimming pools, picnicking facilities and playgrounds (See Figure 15-3).

Another question asked in the survey was: "In my community, existing opportunities and/or facilities should be improved for which of the following recreation activities?" The responses, selected from an attached list, closely resembled those given for the new facilities question. The existing facilities listed as most needing enhancement were picnicking,

bicycling, swimming pools and golfing (See Figure 15-4).

The final survey question asked: "What new facilities and opportunities are needed on a statewide basis (outside the community or immediate area)?" Fishing and developed camping topped the list followed by golf, wildlife and nature study, and picnicking, as shown on Figure 15-5. The first three also ranked high as local needs. Many of the preferred recreational activities and needed facilities involve direct contact with water and can be incorporated into future water development projects.

15.5.2 Jordan River Meander Corridor

Salt Lake County passed an ordinance in 1994 that established a Jordan River Meander Corridor. The ordinance established the legal boundaries of the Jordan River's natural meander pattern, and set limits on the types of development and land uses that can occur within the designated corridor. In addition to addressing flooding concerns, water quality issues and having a positive impact upon wildlife, the creation of a meander corridor lends itself very well to the establishment of recreational facilities as one of the designated uses.

Many of the cities that border the Jordan River (Salt Lake City, West Valley City, Murray, Midvale, West Jordan, South Jordan, Riverton and Bluffdale) are developing their own management plans for the Jordan River within their city boundaries. Many of these city plans reflect the county's efforts to establish a meander corridor and include the establishment of parkways and trails along the Jordan River stream banks. ■

Table 15-1 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND GRANTS (1967-Present)		
Project Sponsor	Number of Projects	Total Federal Funds (\$1000)
State of Utah	2	
Great Salt Lake Saltair Beach		\$ 886.0
Pioneer Trail - Rotary Glen		25.0
Salt Lake County	34	4088.4
Alta Canyon Recreation District	1	217.2
Provo-Jordan River Park Authority	2	1,705.9
Sugar House Park Authority	2	6.7
Midvale	1	42.8
Murray City	9	2,143.2
Riverton	1	99.7
Salt Lake City	8	1,751.5
Sandy	7	1,056.2
South Jordan	1	24.0
West Jordan	2	445.2
West Valley City	2	150.6
Total		\$12,732.4

Figure 15-1
Favored Individual Outdoor Recreation
 Survey Respondents Listed Their Top five Favored Individual Activities

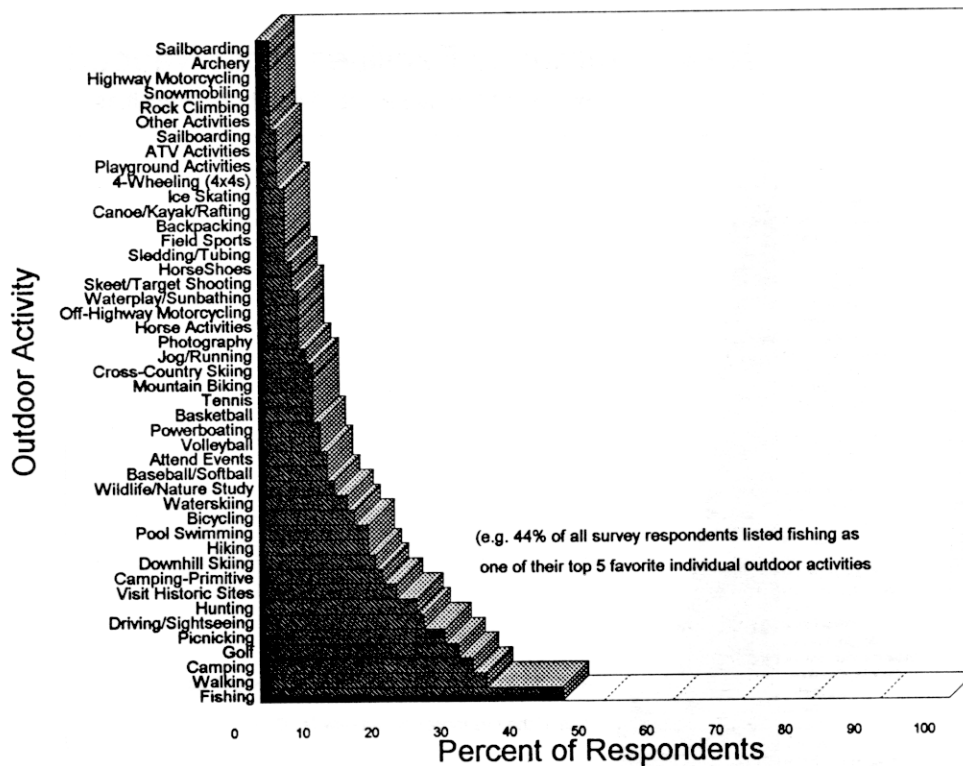


Figure 15-2
Favored Family Outdoor Recreation
 Survey Respondents Listed Their Five Most Favored Family Activities

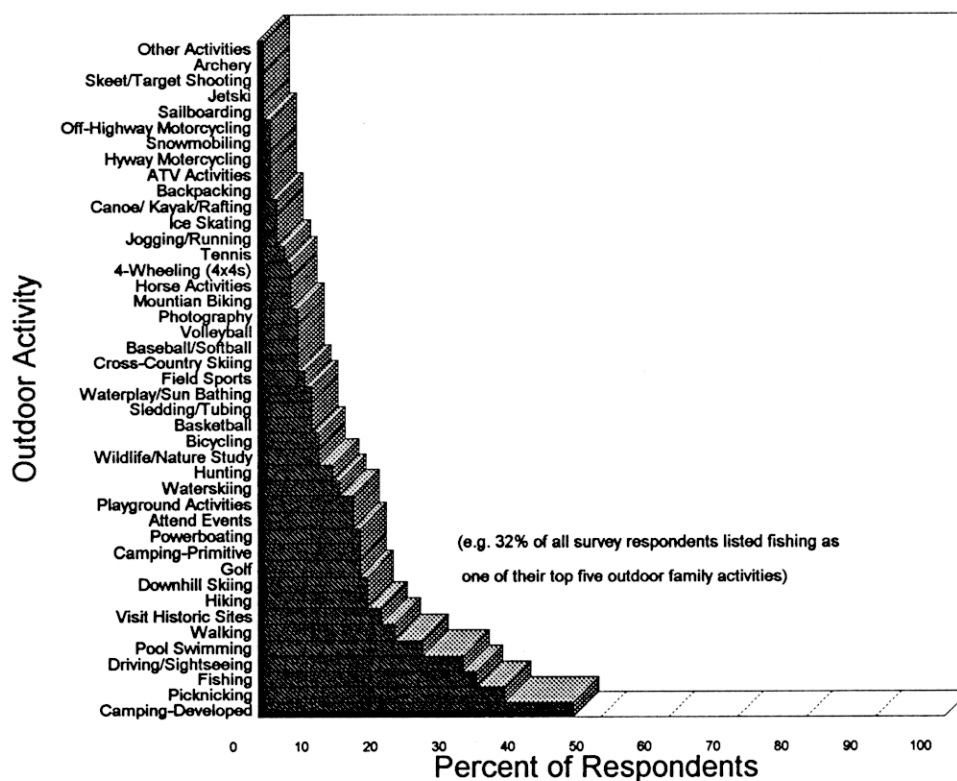


Figure 15-3
New Community Facilities Most Needed
 Survey Respondents listed the five most needed new Facilities

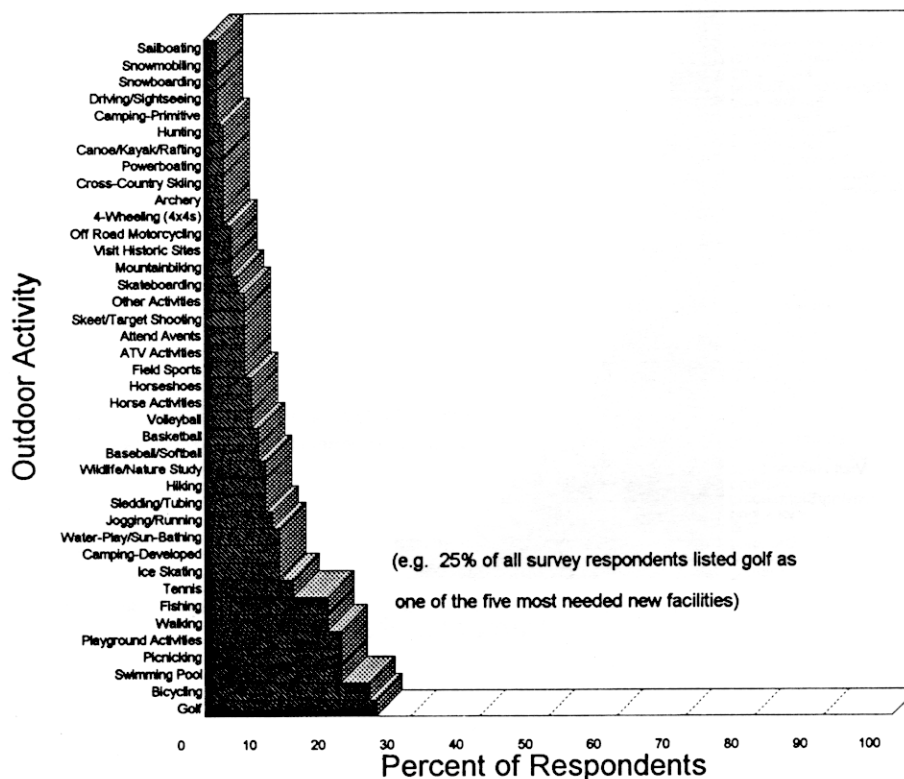


Figure 15-4
EXISTING FACILITIES ENHANCEMENT NEEDED

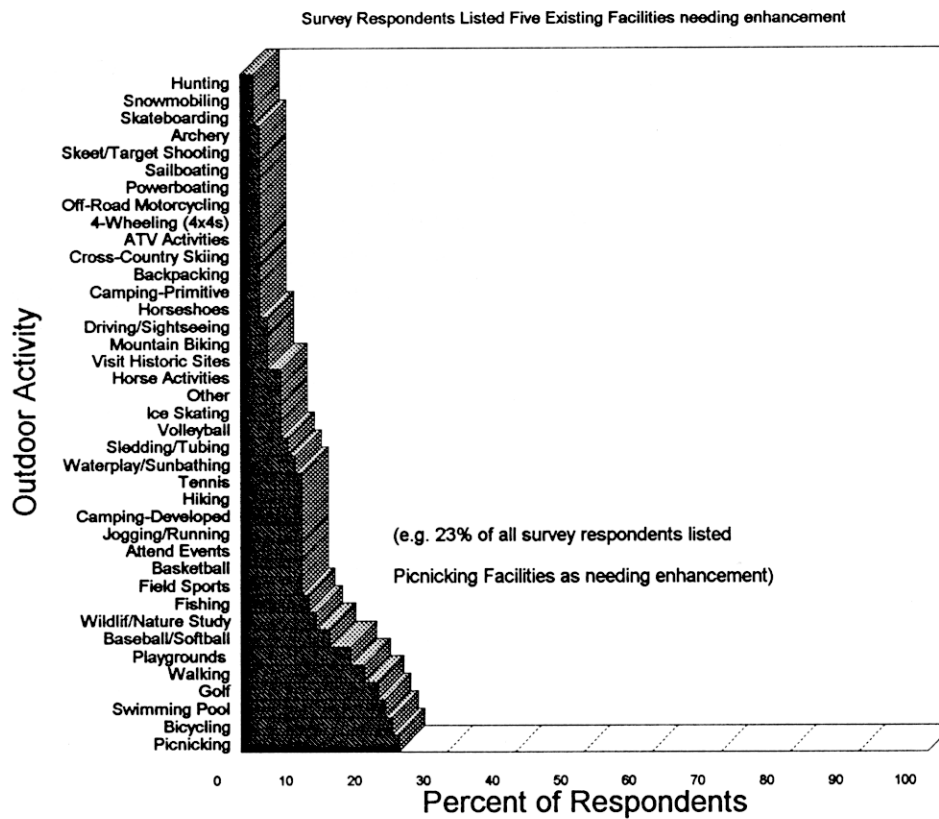


Figure 15-5
NEW STATEWIDE FACILITIES NEEDED

